



# Summary

The national recession left its mark on Beaver County during 2001. Yet, the effects weren't devastating. In fact, when agricultural employment covered under the unemployment insurance laws (the source of our employment data) is included, Beaver County eked out a modicum of employment expansion.

Unemployment rose during 2001, but remained relatively low. Recessionary pressures shoved residential construction down, but nonresidential permits held their own. However, perhaps the most distressing figure of 2001 was a slight decline in sales.

## *Population*

After suffering from out-migration for three decades, Beaver County started growing again in the 80s. By the 90s, population growth torqued up a notch. Between 1990 and 2000, Beaver County's population grew by 26 percent, placing it almost dead middle in a ranking of Utah counties. This marks the fastest census-to-census expansion for Beaver County since 1910. Moreover, Beaver County's rate of population growth doubled the national average of only 13 percent. In addition preliminary population estimates for 2001 show Beaver County (2.9 percent) growing more rapidly than Utah (2.2 percent).

In the 90s, Minersville was the fastest growing Beaver County township—this town increased its population base by one-third in just 10 years. However, rates of population expansion between 1990 and 2000 proved relatively similar for Beaver, Milford, Minersville and the remainder of the county. Not surprisingly, the county's largest town, Beaver City, added the most new residents in the last decade.

## *Demographics*

One of the more noticeable changes over the past decade was the increase in Beaver County's Hispanic population. In 1990, 3.8 percent of the county's population was Hispanic.

By 2000, that share had increased to 5.5 percent. In fact, the share of nonwhite/Hispanic population in the county more than doubled between 1990 and 2000. Still, Beaver County remains much less racially and ethnically diverse than the state and the nation. Only 9 percent of the county's population is nonwhite or Hispanic compared to 31 percent nationally and 15 percent in Utah.

Over the past 10 years, Beaver County bucked the trend of most areas by becoming younger instead of older. In 1990, 16 percent of the county's population was over the age of 65 compared to only 14 percent in 2000. Nevertheless, Beaver County still exhibits a higher share of seniors than either the U.S. (12 percent) or Utah (6 percent).

Nevertheless, Beaver County still shows a higher percentage of the population under the age of 18 than does the nation (34 percent compared to 26 percent nationally). This population distribution means Beaver County has a small proportion of working-age adults "supporting" its seniors and children. Only 53 percent of the county's population was between the ages of 18 and 65 compared to 62 percent for the U.S.

Beaver County's household size remained almost steady between 1990 and 2000, dropping marginally from 2.97 persons to 2.93 persons. Beaver County families are much more likely than Utah or U.S. families to be headed by a married couple. Female-headed families with children also make up a smaller share of Beaver County families than in the state or the nation.

In terms of 2000 educational attainment, 83 percent of the county's adults (over 25 years of age) had graduated from high school—slightly below the state average. Not surprisingly for a nonurban area, Beaver County also showed a smaller share of college graduates. However,

this portion of the adult population increased by one-third between 1990 and 2000 in Beaver County.

## *The Labor Market*

On the surface, Beaver County's 2001 labor market indicators might seem rather depressing. The usual "best" measure of economic well-being, *nonfarm* jobs, dropped by 1.4 percent. However, "covered agricultural" jobs make up a large share of Beaver County's employment base. While not usually counted because they represent only a limited share of agricultural employment, in some counties, these figures provide added insight into the economy. In this case, expansion in covered agricultural jobs was enough to shove Beaver County's employment expansion figures up to 0.3 percent.

Most of Beaver County's major industries lost employment during 2001. Only construction, mining, trade and covered agriculture added new jobs. Moreover, only covered agriculture showed a year-over increase of more than 10 jobs.

The services and transportation/communication/utilities industry job losses put the largest drag on the Beaver County economy. These losses were enough to nudge Beaver County's unemployment rate up to 4.2 percent in 2001. However, this is still relatively low joblessness for a nonurban county. Please note that Beaver County's jobless rate registered below both the state and national averages.

Data from Census 2000 shows that Beaver County's labor force participation increased during the 90s. Not only did a younger working-age population contribute to this change, but a rise in the portion of women who work outside the home pushed up the rate. Mothers are certainly working more. About 60 percent of children under six have both parents in the Beaver County labor force.

## *Wages and Income*

As in many nonurban areas, wages in Beaver County are relatively low. With an average monthly wage of \$1,742, Beaver County in 2001 ranks in the bottom third of Utah's counties. The county's average wage measured only 70 percent of the state average—a significant decrease from 1989 when wages topped out at 82 percent of the state average. Fortunately, in

2001, Beaver County average wages increased by more than 3 percent—just slightly ahead of inflation.

Transportation/communications/utilities is the highest-paying industry in the county. Moreover, in comparison with statewide industries, transportation/communications/utilities workers' wages registered 138 percent of their Utah counterparts. Trade showed the lowest average wage because many trade jobs are part-time and low-pay.

Median family income figures in Beaver County rank well below state and national averages. Moreover, in terms of per capita personal income, Beaver County again ranks in the lower half of the state. Yet, even with low wages and income, only 8 percent of the population is counted among those in poverty—lower than both state and national averages.

## *Other indicators*

The value of total construction permits issued in Beaver County during 2001 dropped by 35 percent. Declines in new residential building and nonresidential additions/alterations/repairs produced this annual decline. On the other hand, new nonresidential construction actually increased slightly during the year.

The gross taxable sales figures provided another economic "downer" during 2001. Sales dropped by 4 percent—the first drop in almost a decade. Sales in the retail sector actually increased in 2001. However, wholesale trade and services sales declines coupled with declining capital expenditures led to this decrease in sales activity.

## *The End*

While the nation churned in a recession, Beaver County managed to actually add a few jobs and to keep its unemployment rate low. True a few soft spots exist—several industries have struggled and sales and construction are down. Nevertheless, Beaver County has made it through the national downturn with very few problems.